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Letter dated 22 December 2006 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement, signed by the Government of Burundi and Palipehutu-Forces nationales de libération (FNL) on 7 September 2006 in Dar-es-Salaam, under the auspices of the Regional Peace Initiative for Burundi and the South African Facilitator of the Burundi Peace Process.

Despite the continued efforts of the South African Facilitation to end the impasse, regrettably, there has been no progress in the implementation of the Agreement in the last three months since the ceasefire entered into force on 10 September 2006. I am therefore encouraged by the outcome of the 16 December 2006 meeting between the Government of Burundi and FNL, which was held in Dar-es-Salaam under the auspices of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and the South African Facilitation. I hope that the two parties will now move ahead with the early implementation of the Agreement.

In the meantime, the Security Council would recall that, at the request of the Government of Burundi, the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) will conclude its mandate on 31 December 2006. Consequently and as a result of the delays in implementation, ONUB will not be able to carry out the tasks envisaged for it under the Ceasefire Agreement. Instead, it is expected that the African Union Special Task Force will perform these tasks.

In this regard, it is also expected that the South African battalion currently deployed with ONUB will remain in Burundi and form part of the African Union Force. On 16 December 2006, an African Union delegation started discussions in Bujumbura with the Government and the United Nations on the modalities for the deployment of the African Union Force. As a result of those consultations, the United Nations received a request on 19 December 2006 from the African Union for the provision of limited logistical assistance, which would be required to ensure that the South African battalion remains operational following the conclusion of the ONUB mandate.

In view of the need to resume the implementation of the Agreement and the vital role that the African Union Special Task Force is expected to play in that regard as of 1 January 2007, it is my intention to respond positively to the request to provide limited logistical assistance to the African Union Special Task Force. It is

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also my intention to seek General Assembly approval for the arrangements relating to that request.

I should be grateful if you would bring this urgent matter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**